News release

First forecasts from new home

15 September 2003

Forecasts from the Met Office are now being issued from its new state-of-the-art premises in Exeter. Although weather forecasts have been produced at the new operations centre and headquarters since the end of August, as from today all forecasts will come from there. The Met Office, formerly based in Bracknell, Berkshire, is now fully operational in Exeter but TV viewers and radio listeners will not notice any difference. What has been described as the most complex operational IT move ever attempted in Europe has indeed been completed seamlessly.

International forecasts for the aviation industry, severe weather warnings and the Shipping forecast are all now being produced by Met Office forecasters in the new building.

Speaking from the new headquarters today, Met Office Chief Executive Peter Ewins, said: "It's a very exciting time for us, starting to work in a vastly different and greatly improved environment. In December 2001, we said that our aim was to be operational in Exeter by September 2003. The fact that we have achieved our aim, and done so within budget, is a great tribute to all concerned."

The Met Office announced it would be moving to Exeter in October 2000. The contract to build, and then to operate and maintain the new building over 15 years, was awarded to Stratus - a consortium comprising Costain-Skanska and Global Solutions Limited - the following year. The contract is worth £150 million over 15 years, with approximately £80 million being spent on construction. Work on the new building began in mid-2001, since then everything has progressed according to schedule and around 1,150 people will be working in Devon by the end of the year.

Peter Ewins said: "When I came to Exeter three years ago I said how impressed we were with the facilities which the south-west has to offer, and by the enthusiasm and encouragement we received to move here. Everything that has happened since has justified our decision and I am sure that our new home will provide a firm foundation for the Met Office's business for many decades to come."

The building has been designed with resilience and business continuity firmly in mind. Major IT systems are split and housed in separate IT halls, and emergency power can be generated on site. Office space is built around the Street which, when finished, will house a restaurant, gym, and shop - along with some striking artwork. The buildings have been designed to the highest environmental standards and the site is being landscaped to be sympathetic to the surrounding environment.

More about the Met Office in Exeter

For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

PRINTABLE VERSION

About
Met Office
Hadley Centre
Terms and conditions
Advertise on our site

News
News release archive
Media Centre

Learn
About the weather
From the bookshelf

Services

Mobile text forecasts
Weathercall
Marinecall
Mountain weather
MetWEB
Talk to a forecaster

Links
Met Office data users
National met. services
Scientific interest sites
EA Floodline
Directgov
Freedom of Information

Contact
Contact us
Questions answered

© Crown copyright